

Language learners with special needs: An international perspective

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Vocabulary Learning in Dyslexia – The Case of a Hungarian Learner

ÁGNES SARKADI

The aim of this qualitative research was to gain information about the vocabulary learning processes of a Hungarian dyslexic learner of English and to examine the student's reactions to the use of compensatory techniques recommended for teaching foreign languages to dyslexics. According to the findings, the learner in question experienced severe difficulties in vocabulary acquisition. She found English spelling and pronunciation extremely challenging because of the deep orthography of the language. Furthermore, the memorization of misread word forms and the confusion of similar looking and sounding words also caused problems. As for the special techniques recommended for teaching dyslexics, the elimination of homogenous inhibition, the application of multisensory techniques and mnemonic devices and the explicit teaching of grapheme-phoneme correspondences helped the student to overcome some of her difficulties in vocabulary acquisition.

Hungarian teachers' perceptions of dyslexic language learners

JUDIT KORMOS AND EDIT KONTRA

This paper reports on an interview study conducted at five different schools in Hungary with teachers involved in a special compensatory program for dyslexic language learners. The teachers worked in close co-operation with speech therapists, psychologists and experts in special education in preparing and implementing the course. The in-depth semi-structured interviews aimed to discover the language teachers' and special education experts' perception of the nature of the problems dyslexia causes in foreign language learning at the classroom level, and of the effectiveness of the preparatory training the teachers received in this field. With the help of a 'thick description' of the data, the authors present an insider's perspective of working with dyslexic language learners and capture the essence of their findings in a model, which also highlights the need for a change in the present attitudes of teachers and schools.

Deaf EFL Learners Outside the School System

ÁGNES BAJKÓ AND EDIT KONTRA

This article describes the case of a small group of Deaf adults taking an English course specifically designed for them at a private language school in Hungary. The authors examine the learners' beliefs about language learning, their motivation and their learning strategies and also provide an insight into the methods and materials used by their teacher. Data were gathered via a series of observations, student and teacher interviews, a questionnaire and the analysis of teaching materials. The study focuses on the advantages of using sign language in teaching foreign languages to the Deaf. The research findings are of particular significance in an environment where sign language is not acknowledged as the first language of the Deaf, and where public education and teacher training institutions overwhelmingly promote the oralist method of teaching and the exclusive use of the language of the hearing majority.